



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**FEDERAL JUDGE SENTENCES WACO MAN TO 17 YEARS IMPRISONMENT
IN PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS CASE**

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that 38-year-old Daniel Eugene Thurston of Waco, Texas, was sentenced this afternoon to 17 years in federal prison for being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm.

In addition to the prison term, U.S. District Judge Walter S. Smith, Jr., ordered the armed career criminal to be placed under supervised release for a period of five years after completing his prison term.

On April 20, 2004, Thurston pled guilty to one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm.

According to court documents, on or about August 6, 2003, Thurston stole a 12 gauge shotgun, pawned it and purchased drugs with the proceeds. Thurston's criminal history includes two felony convictions for burglary of a habitation and one felony conviction for robbery.

"Project Safe Neighborhoods is working to remove armed violent criminals from our communities," said United States Attorney Johnny Sutton. Sutton added, "Thanks to the cooperation of federal, state and local law enforcement, violent criminals are being aggressively prosecuted and sentenced to lengthy federal prison terms with no chance for parole."

This case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives together with the Waco Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Doug Gardner and Special Assistant United States Attorney Shelly Strimple prosecuted this case on behalf of the government.

The prosecution of this case is another example of how the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Texas is carrying out the Department of Justice's gun crime initiative - Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN). Project Safe Neighborhoods is a nationwide federal initiative designed to reduce gun violence in our communities. PSN promotes partnerships among federal, state, and local law enforcement to target criminals in possession of guns. Federal law insures that when an armed criminal is arrested, that individual will face swift criminal prosecution and be exiled from the community through the use of stiff mandatory prison sentences.

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